

1804

A Sermon on Infant Baptism, Preached at  
Winthrop, Nov. 4, 1804, at the Baptism of the Rev.  
Mr. Belden's Child to which are Subjoined the Rev.  
Mr. Fisher's Hymn on Infant Dedication, and the  
Rev. Mr. Sewall's Poem on the Mode of Baptism

Eliphalet Gillet

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A  
**SERMON**  
ON  
**INFANT BAPTISM,**

PREACHED AT *WINTHROP*, *Nov. 4, 1804*,  
AT THE BAPTISM OF THE REV. MR. BELDEN'S CHILD.

TO WHICH ARE SUBJOINED  
THE REV. MR. FISHER'S HYMN ON  
*INFANT DEDICATION,*

AND  
THE REV. MR. SEWALL'S POEM ON  
*THE MODE OF BAPTISM.*

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BY ELIPHALET GILLET, A. M.  
PASTOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN HALLOWELL.

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I also will shew mine opinion.....*Job xxxii. 10.*

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RE-PRINTED BY S. K. GILMAN, HALLOWELL...1820.

## ADVERTISEMENT.

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IT is not pretended that there is any thing new in the following sheets. Any one who will give himself the trouble of looking into the writings of Doctors Hemmenway, Emmons, Lathrop, Perkins, and Buckminster; and of Rev. Messrs. Chaplin, Edwards, Stevens, Sewall, and many others; may see the same truths illustrated and enforced, and confirmed by similar proofs; and in some of them, treated more at large. It has been the object of the writer to compress the arguments in a small compass, and set them in a plain and convincing light. How far he has succeeded, the reader will judge.

The writer has seen some publications, designed to disprove the sentiments here inculcated which he has been pleased with, as they discover considerable penetration, and a good degree of impartiality. He has also seen others, which he thought exceptionable in these respects; as where one styles the advocates for infant baptism, "champions for babies, or rather *baby*-champions;"\* and another, with more zeal than wisdom, calls infant baptism "an abomination to the Lord."† He hopes the reader will find nothing in the present publication, which savors of bitterness of spirit, or which affects to despise any christian's Practice—nothing but what is consistent with truth and candor. A cause, that needs indirect means to support it, is not worth supporting. Those who say there is nothing in favor of infant baptism from Genesis to Revelation, without attempting any proof of the assertion, it is not expected this Discourse will convince. But to those who are willing to examine for themselves, "whether these things are so," it may be of some little help, and can possibly do them no harm. To those who have requested its publication, and to any others, into who hands it may fall, it is cheerfully dedicated by

THE AUTHOR.

HALLOWELL. NOV. 1804.

\* *Dialogue, by a Friend to truth.*

† *Smith's Sermon.*

## SERMON.

### ROMANS xi. 17.

*And thou, being a wild olivetree, wert grafted in amongst them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olivetree.*

PAUL was especially an "apostle of the Gentiles." And he "magnified his office." (a) In his various Epistles, and particularly, in that to the Romans, he declared it to be the design of the gracious Covenant to embrace Gentiles, as well as Jews. And in the text, he considers them as different branches of the same tree. Hence the following doctrine,

*The Jewish church and Christian church are ESSENTIALLY the same.*

By this, it is not meant that there is the same *degree* of light and liberty in the church, under its former and its present administration. The Sun of righteousness shines brighter and brighter in every age. The rituals of the Jewish church were many, and some of them burdensome. They are called a "yoke of bondage," when compared with the rituals of the Christian church, which are few, simple and plain; and are considered as the "liberty wherewith Christ has made us free." (b) But it is meant as expressed. They are *essentially* the same. This truth will appear evident from the following considerations.

1. The same qualifications are required in both.

Holiness has always been required for entering into covenant. Abraham was eminently holy. He is called "the friend of God." (c) He "believed God, and it was imputed

(a) Rom. xi. 13.

(b) Gal. v. 1.

(c) 2 Chron xx. 7. Isa. xli. 8.

to him for righteousness.”(a) “He received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness, of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised.”(b) This holy, believing temper led to obedience, and was a term of communion, not only to Abraham, but to all the members of the Jewish church. “This day the Lord thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes and judgments; thou shalt therefore keep and do them, with all thine heart and with all thy soul. Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice. And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments.”(c) All the people promised this. “And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken, *we will do.*”(d) The divine conduct towards them proves that holiness of heart was required, as a term of covenanting. “So we see, says the apostle, that they could not enter in because of *unbelief.*”(e) And he declares “they were broken off because of *unbelief;*” and that the Gentiles, grafted in, “stood by *faith.*”(f) David also gives the same account of them. “They returned and inquired early after God. And they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their Redeemer. Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues; for their *heart* was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant.”(g) This shews that God required and they professed holiness of heart, as a term of covenanting.

The same holy temper is required in entering into the Christian church. Indeed, this is not doubted. The scripture is very express. “*Repent* ye, therefore, and *be converted*, that your sins may be blotted out.”(h) “He that *believeth* shall be saved.”(i) “With the *heart* man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”(j) This subject is set in a very clear light

(a) Jas. ii. 23. (b) Rom. iv. 11. (c) Deut. xxvi. 16, 17, 18.

(d) Exod. xix. 8. (e) Heb. iii. 19. (f) Rom. xi. 20.

(g) Psalms lxxviii. 34, 35, 36, 37. (h) Acts iii. 19.

(i) Mark xvi. 16. (j) Rom. x. 10.

in the following passages. "Know ye, therefore, that they which are of faith the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us : for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree : that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."(a)

Mistakes have arisen on this subject from people's looking at the practice of the Jewish church, rather than to God's requirements and their professions. If we should judge of the nature and foundation of the christian church, from the conduct of the great body of its professors, we should have but too many arguments against its *spirituality*. And yet among them God has "a seed to serve him. It is accounted unto the Lord for a generation."(b)

2. Our doctrine is further evident from the consideration, that the same *character* is given of both churches, in the scriptures. It is said of the Jewish church ; "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation."(c) "For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh : but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God."(d)

The same is said of the Christian church. "Ye also as living stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious. Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people ; that ye should shew forth

(a) Gal. iii. 7, 8, 9, 13, 14.

(b) Ps. xxii. 30.

(c) Exod. xix. 5, 6.

(d) Rom. ii. 28, 29.

the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light : which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God : which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.”(a)

Was the holiness of the Jewish church considered only as a ceremonial holiness? Read the following scriptures. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words which I command thee this day shall be *in thine heart*, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and thou shalt write them upon the doorposts of thine house, and upon thy gates.”(b)

3. Both the Jewish church and Christian church are said to be purchased and redeemed by the blood of Christ.

“Fear and dread shall fall upon them : by the greatness of thine arm they shall be as still as a stone ; till thy people pass over, O Lord ; till the people pass over which thou hast purchased.”(c) “Remember thy congregation which thou hast purchased of old, the rod of thine inheritance which thou hast *redeemed*.”(d) “But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not : for I have *redeemed* thee, I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine.”(e) They were redeemed not only from Egyptian bondage, but from spiritual defilement. “And he shall redeem Israel from all his *iniquities*.”(f)

So of the Christian church. “Feed the church of God, which he hath *purchased* with his own blood.”(g) “Forasmuch as ye know, that ye were not *redeemed* with corruptible things, as silver and gold ; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”(h)

THE justness and application of the foregoing arguments and remarks may be confirmed from the express testimony of scripture ; and also from the nature of a covenant of grace.

(a) 1 Pet. ii. 5, 7, 9, 10.

(d) Psalms lxxiv. 2.

(g) Acts xx. 28.

(b) Deut. vi. 5, 6, 7.—xi. 20.

(e) Isa. xliii. 1.

(h) 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

(c) Exod. xv. 16.

(f) Ps. cxxx. 8.

Paul says, "Not as tho the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children: but in Isaac shall thy seed be called."(a) "Know ye therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham."(b) The church came down in the natural posterity of Abraham, in the line of Isaac. And there was always a spiritual seed among them—"children of the promise."(c) "I say then, hath God cast away *his people*?" (i. e. the seed of Abraham.) "God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away *his people*, which he foreknew. I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid."(d) They never were wholly cast off, but only *in part*. "Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in: and so all Israel shall be saved. For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sake: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the FATHERS' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."(e) Thus the church has always descended, and in a certain sense, always will descend, in the line of Abraham's natural seed. They were never all excluded, but the Gentiles were incorporated with them. "So then, they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham; that he might be the father of all them that believe, tho they be not circumcised."(f) It is expressly said "that the Gentiles should be *fellow-heirs*, and of the *same body*, and partakers of his promise in Christ, by the gospel. For if the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches are broken off, and thou, being a wild olivetree, wert grafted in amongst them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olivetree; boast not against the

(a) Rom. ix. 6, 7.

(b) Gal. iii. 7.

(c) Rom. ix. 8.

(d) Rom. xi. 1, 2, 11.

(e) Rom. xi. 25, 26, 27, 28, 29.

(f) Gal. iii. 9. Rom. iv. 11



branches: but if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee."(*a*)

The good olivetree was not Christ, as some have supposed, but the Jewish church. "The Lord called thy name, A green olivetree, fair and of goodly fruit."(*b*) "His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olivetree."(*c*) The root of this tree was Abraham. The natural branches were his natural posterity. The Gentiles were a wild olive-tree. Some of the natural branches were broken off, and some of the branches, wild by nature, being grafted in, partook of the root and fatness of the good olivetree. Now if the Abrahamic church was not the true, gracious and good church of Christ, there would not have been much *fatness* to partake of. If it had been only a national church, the Gentiles would hardly have wished to have been grafted in among them, when their sceptre and all their worldly glory had departed from them. By being grafted in, they could not expect to receive more than the root afforded. And had it been only worldly, ceremonial, or national; it would have been in truth, like "a root out of a dry ground."(*d*) But as it was spiritual, the advantages were great. The privileges promised to Abraham, and enjoyed by all the faithful, were abundant and everlasting: such as the oracles of God, holy ordinances, divine influences, pardoning mercy and eternal salvation. "They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ. To them pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God and the promises; of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever."(*e*)

I observed also, that the truth of our subject appeared from the nature of a covenant of grace. God could not consistently enter into covenant upon any other ground, than the real, gracious sincerity of those that covenanted with him. There must certainly be a profession of this. And they are said to *break* his covenant, when they are insincere. "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay

(*a*) Eph. iii. 6. Rom. xi. 16, 17, 18. (*b*) Jer. xi. 11. (*c*) Hos. xiv. 6.  
(*d*) Isa. liii. 2. (*e*) 1 Cor. x. 4. Rom. ix. 4, 5.

in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation ; he that believeth shall not make haste. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding-place.”(a) When was this STONE laid? Not at the commencement of the christian dispensation. It was an ancient foundation. “Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and PROPHETS, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone ; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.”(b)

From all which it appears very evident that the Jewish church and Christian church are essentially the same — built upon the same foundation, composed of the same materials, watched over with the same care here, and will shine forth with the same splendor, majesty and glory hereafter.

### IMPROVEMENT.

If we have succeeded in proving that *the Jewish church and Christian church are essentially the same*, it will help us to right views of the ordinance of christian baptism. We shall attend to its nature and design, its extent, and its mode of administration. May the Lord give us wisdom and grace to understand and obey all his commandments and institutions.

The NATURE and DESIGN of christian baptism are very apparent, if the church is essentially the same under its different outward administrations. Baptism is a sign or token of the covenant, under the Christian dispensation, as circumcision was under the Jewish dispensation. It is a

(a) Isa. xxviii. 16, 17. (b) Eph. ii. 20, 21.

badge of discipleship to Christ. It is a mark God has appointed to be put upon his children.

Now as circumcision, under the former dispensation, pointed to the renewal of nature, the purification of the heart and affections—was a sign of faith in the Redeemer to come, and of obedience to his spiritual government; so baptism is an ordinance of the same significancy. It implies our need of spiritual cleansing, and is a very expressive representation of “the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost,”(a) and thereby receiving Christ, who has appeared and offered himself, a sacrifice for sin. As circumcision was not the *faith* Abraham possessed when he was circumcised, but the *sign* of that faith; so baptism is “not the putting away of the filth of the flesh,” but a sign, figure or representation of it; or “the answer of a good conscience towards God,”(b) by obedience to his appointed institution. Water baptism, to whomsoever administered, is not in itself real, pure holiness, but only a fit emblem of it; as it is said in regard to the former token of the covenant, “Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the *keeping of the commandments of God*,”(c) or as it is elsewhere said, “*faith which worketh by love*,”(d) or the “*new creature*.”(e)

I make this remark to obviate an objection, which is sometimes brought against baptism’s succeeding in the place of circumcision (viz.) that circumcision was only a ceremony which was typical of baptism—an institution of the Mosaic law that typified a gospel institution.\* Now types and shadows refer to substances; as “the blood of bulls and

(a) Titus iii. v.

(b) 1 Pet. iii. 21.

(c) 1 Cor. vii. 19.

(d) Gal. v. 6.

(e) Gal. vi. 15.

\* Some have considered the token of the covenant under the former dispensation, as referring to the atoning blood of Christ. But a moment’s reflection will shew that this cannot be admitted. Sacrifices may be appointed, as typical of Christ, the great sacrifice: but no token of a covenant, which a person applies to himself, can consistently typify any thing which has the nature of an atonement. Various tokens may represent the good effects of the atonement, in cleansing the soul from spiritual defilement. In this respect both circumcision and baptism are proper institutions, in the particular time for which they were appointed.

of goats”(a) referred to the precious and all atoning blood of Christ, and the temporal Canaan to the eternal “rest that remains to the people of God.”(b) But upon this supposition, the type referred to a thing which was itself typical. It brings one no nearer the substance than before. It is not an emblem of some essence, reality or substantial good; but only an emblem of a shadowy representation, which leaves one as far from the *object* of one’s faith, hope and desire, as before the type was done away.

Instead of the token of the covenant, in one age of the church, being typical of the token of the covenant, in another age, they are both of the same nature, and refer to the same thing—a new heart, or repentance and faith. “Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked.”(c) “And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.”(d) So baptism represents “believing with all the heart,”(e) and the washing away of sin by the blood of Christ. Circumcision was a token of covenant between God and the church: so is baptism. As the former, in regard to the subject of it, was a mark of his being separated from the world, and set apart for God; so the latter is a mark of discipleship, and holy dedication. Both circumcision and baptism are distinguishing, solemn, covenant transactions.

Those, who have considered circumcision typical, have also considered the whole Abrahamic church typical—not a spiritual church, but national. But the Passover, an institution under the former dispensation, was no more typical, than the Lord’s Supper, under the present. The great difference between them is, the former pointed to a Savior to come, and the latter to a Savior already come. They are both representations of his body—the bread of life. The scriptures evidently consider the subject in this light. “Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new

(a) Heb. x. 4.

(d) Deut. xxx. 6.

(b) Heb. iv. 9.

(e) Acts viii. 37.

(c) Deut. x. 16.

lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our PASSOVER is sacrificed for us.”(a)

Now as the Lord's Supper is of the same nature and design as the Passover, it gives us a further proof that baptism is of the same nature and design as circumcision. Like that, it denotes our natural defilement, and is a lively and a fit representation of our being cleansed from guilt, by the atoning blood of Christ. It is a sign of faith, and the church's token of covenant. and should be applied to all, who are scriptural subjects of it. This leads me to speak of

The EXTENT of christian baptism, or to whom it may be properly administered. In regard to this, men have differed in opinion and practice. And the difference, by some, is considered so great, as to be just ground of refusal of communion in christian ordinances. Tho I do not look upon the subject in this light, and should be perfectly willing to, and heartily rejoice in an opportunity of, mutually receiving and reciprocating the most intimate acts of christian fellowship, with those who think and practice differently from me, in this respect; yet I do consider the principle of sufficient importance to command a candid, critical and prayerful examination: not only that we may be the better satisfied ourselves, in regard to this christian ordinance; but that we may also be the better able “to give a reason”(b) to others, for our faith and practice.

The subject we have been upon, i. e. the unity of God's church in all ages, may help to settle disputes upon the extent of christian baptism; or at least shew us on which side the truth lies. It is not disputed, whether believers are proper subjects of baptism. We all hold to believers' baptism. But the question is, whether the ordinance is to be administered to believers together with their infant offspring. I suppose it to be a truth, conceded by all, that when “Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness,”(c) that he received the token of the covenant, not only for himself, but for his offspring, and even for his servants and dependants—all that were under his control, and

(a) 1 Cor. v. 7.

(b) 1 Pet. iii. 15.

(c) Rom. iv. 3.

that he was to bring up for God. Now it must apply with equal *extension*, in regard to baptism, unless God has expressly limited it, and denied to christian parents, under the present dispensation, some of the privileges they enjoyed under the former. But there is no intimation of this in scripture. It is no where said, that in the extension of the borders of the christian church, there should be a diminution of more than half the subjects of christian ordinances. Tho the *token* of the covenant was altered, it is no where said, nor intimated, that the *subjects* of it were altered. In this respect all things remained as before. This remark is justified from the *figure* made use of in the text. The Jewish church was the good olivetree. Abraham was the root, and his posterity the natural branches. Some of these were broken off because of unbelief: but others remained in their fair and flourishing state; representing parents and children, as all agree, in regard to the Jewish church. Now does it look likely that the Gentiles, who were branches taken from the wild olivetree, and grafted in among them, and "stood by faith," were in a more barren, unflourishing state? Were their offspring all denied the token of the covenant? Was there such an unlikeness in the branches of this spiritual tree? Must the Jewish branches look all green, flourishing and fair; and the Gentile branches have every twig, bud and blossom stript off, before they were engrafted in? Such a process, besides looking very unnatural, would have been likely to have produced schisms and divisions. It would not only have spoiled the symmetry, uniformity and beauty of the tree, but introduced such inequality of privileges, as to have fostered pride on the one hand, and excited envy on the other. And indeed if this had been the case, it could not have been said, that Christ had "made of twain one new man—had broken down the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles, and made both one."<sup>(a)</sup> But the Gentiles were made *fellow-heirs* and *fellow-citizens*; which implies an equal participation of christian privileges. Some, however, to obviate this objection, have supposed

(a) Eph. ii. 14, 15.

that at the commencement of the christian dispensation, the Jews then in the church, as well as the Gentiles about to be admitted, were allowed no longer to consider their children, as fit subjects for the token of a covenant. This supposition is not only without proof from scripture, but inadmissible from the very circumstances of the case.' The Jews were very tenacious of their privileges. And they were very ready to find fault at the introduction of the christian dispensation. Many of their objections against it are stated in the scriptures. But they never complain of its limiting their ordinances; as they certainly would have done, had this supposition been founded in fact. They complain of the gospel's opening a wide door to the Gentiles,<sup>(a)</sup> but never of its curtailing their own accustomed privileges.

With this view of the subject, which I have presented, perfectly agrees the practice of the apostles and primitive christians. They baptized Lydia and her household, the Jailor and his household, and Stephanas and his household.

If all the household of Lydia believed, it was a circumstance much more striking and important, than her individual conversion; yet there is not a word said of it in the relation, when her own case is mentioned very minutely: "whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul."<sup>(b)</sup> And from her own remark on the subject, it is natural to conclude that she was the only believer. "If ye have judged *me* to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there."<sup>(c)</sup> Yet it is said, "she was baptised and her *household*." If they had all been adults and believers, it would have been more natural for her to have said, "If ye have judged *us* to be faithful." It appears that her family, whether consisting of infants, or children, or both, were baptized solely on her profession of faith.—The case of the Jailor is still more particular. He was alarmed by "the earthquake and the opening of the prison doors, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt

(a) Acts xi. 1—18.

(b) Acts xvi. 14.

(c) Acts xvi. 15.

be saved and thy house.”(a) It is added, that “they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house,” i. e. to all that were collected together on so surprising an occasion. “And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and *all his*, straightway.”(b) Now it is improbable that all the members of this family were old enough to make a personal profession of faith. Or if this were admitted, it is more improbable still, that they should all be converted in the same moment. And if this were the case, which is so extraordinary as not to have a parallel, in the scriptures, (as there is no instance of a whole family’s being converted at once,) it is wholly unaccountable that no record should be made of it. Their conversion would have been much more extraordinary than their baptism. And yet the latter is mentioned expressly, and the former passed over in silence. What is said of his “rejoicing and believing in God, with all his house,”(c)\* is perfectly consistent with his being the only convert; and they admitted to christian privileges on his account. The representation of the case of Zaccheus is very similar, where he is confessedly the only subject of divine grace. “This day is salvation come to *this house*, forso much as *he* also is the son of Abraham.”(d) In addition to these, Paul says, he “baptised also the household of Stephanas.”(e) Not only in common speech, but throughout the Bible, the word *household* suggests the idea of children. Pharaoh invited Joseph’s brethren to bring “their father and their *households* into Egypt.”(f) And it is said, “The sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, and their *little ones*, and their wives.”(g) So when Paul says, “A bishop must rule well his own *house* or *household*,” (for the same word is used, in the original, when the household of Lydia and Stephanas are spoken of,) it is added by way of explanation, “having his *children* in subjection with all gravity.”(h) The baptism of *households*, then, unquestion-

\* The most literal translation is, “He rejoiced over all his house, believing in God.”

(a) Acts xvi. 26, 29, 30, 31. (b) Acts xvi. 32, 33. (c) Acts xvi. 34.

(d) Luke xix. 9. (e) 1 Cor. i. 16. (f) Gen. xlv. 18.

(g) Gen. xlv. 5. (h) 1 Tim. iii. 2, 4.



ably implies that of *children*, together with other *young persons*, which heads of families have taken to "bring up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."<sup>(a)</sup>

As the apostles practised infant baptism, so did all the primitive churches. There is all the evidence of this, we should naturally expect from the state of the case. When a subject is not disputed, there is the less said and written about it. And tho there is but little said about baptism, in the two first centuries; yet what there is said, is in favor of the baptism of infants, and nothing that militates against it. From the third century to the present time, we have not only the evidence of a great variety of credible authors, but even the concessions of the most eminent Baptist writers, that infant baptism has been a *constant*, if not *universal* practice.

Justin Martyr, who wrote but forty years after the apostolic age, mentions "christians who, in their *infancy*, had been *proselyted* to Christ." There was no other way of proselyting infants to christianity, but by putting upon them the *token* of the christian covenant; and there was no other token of the covenant, after the christian dispensation was introduced, but *baptism*. And as he observes some of these were then sixty or seventy years old, they must have been baptized in the time of the apostles.

Irenæus was not quite thirty years later than Justin Martyr. He was a disciple of Polycarp, who was himself a disciple of St. John. He speaks of persons "who were *baptized* unto GOD; INFANTS, and little ones, and youths, and elder persons."

Tertullian flourished about an hundred years after the apostles. He advises to "defer the baptism of infants, except in cases of necessity, or in danger of death." He does not give this advice, because the practice of infant baptism was contrary to the usage of the church. His advice itself proves the existence of the practice. Neither does he give the advice from scruples, respecting their want of sufficient age; for he also advises "the delay of the baptism of all

(a) Eph. vi. 4.

single persons," except in particular circumstances. However unscriptural and inconsistent such advice might be, it proves that both infant and adult baptism was practised in the church, at that day.

Origen was contemporary with Tertullian. He expressly declares infant baptism to have been the constant usage of the church, from the time of the apostles. And he considers the baptism of infants, as an evidence that they were in a state of moral pollution. "What is the reason, says he, that whereas the baptism of the church is given for forgiveness, INFANTS also, by the *usage of the church*, are baptized : when if there were nothing in infants which wanted forgiveness and mercy, baptism would be needless to them." In another treatise he says, "The church had from the apostles a tradition, order or command, to give baptism to infants; for they, to whom the divine mysteries were committed, knew that there was in all persons the pollution of sin, which must be done away by water and the spirit."

Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, in the third century, gives his testimony to the antiquity and universality of the practice of infant baptism. Fidus, a country bishop, had instituted this inquiry, whether baptism ought not to be administered on the eighth day, according to the law of circumcision. To resolve this question, a council of sixty-six bishops was convened at Carthage, of which Cyprian was president : and he communicated their unanimous opinion, "that the baptism of infants ought not to be deferred to the eighth day, but might be given to them at any time before." This council was called, not to consider whether infant baptism was a divine institution ; that was conceded universally ; but to consider whether the ordinance was to be administered, as circumcision was, precisely on the eighth day. From this transaction we may learn two things ; that they universally considered baptism, (according to the tenor of this Discourse,) to come in the room of circumcision, and that the baptism of infants was a general practice. As this was but about an hundred and fifty years after the death of the apostles, and as we may well suppose that some of these elders, among so great a number, were seventy or eighty

years old, their recollection will carry us back to the practice of some, who themselves were personally acquainted with the practice of the apostles.

Gregory Nazianzen also "exhorts parents to offer their children to God in baptism."

St. Austin, at or near the beginning of the fourth century, had a controversy with Pelagius, upon the doctrine of original sin. And in proof of it, adduced the practice of infant baptism. He says, "Why are infants baptized for the remission of sin, if they have none?" And adds, "Infant baptism the whole church practises; it was not instituted by councils, but was *ever in use*." Now it stood Pelagius in hand to deny the existence of this practice, as that would very much have favored his argument. But he attempts no such thing. So far from it, that when some suggested that by denying original sin, he denied the right of infants to baptism, he utterly discards the idea, and affirms that "he never heard of any, not the most impious heretic, that denied baptism to infants." This is strong proof of universal practice; for Pelagius was not only a great scholar, but a great traveller. He was born in Britain, travelled to and resided some time in Rome; from whence he went to Egypt and to Jerusalem. He must therefore know the opinions and practice of the churches in most parts of Christendom; and yet he knew of none that denied the divine institution of infant baptism.

After this period, we have a cloud of witnesses to prove, not only the acknowledged propriety of infant baptism, but its universal practice. It is not necessary however to adduce them, as Dr. Gill, one of the most learned writers among the Baptists, allows that "infant baptism was the practice of the church universally, from the third to the eleventh century." This concession will give weight to the following observations of Dr. Wall, in his history of infant baptism. "For the first FOUR HUNDRED YEARS, there appears only one man, Tertullian, that advised the delay of infant baptism, in some cases; and one Gregory, that did perhaps practise such delay, in the case of his own children: but no society so thinking, or so practising, nor one man

so saying, that it was unlawful to baptize infants. In the next SEVEN HUNDRED years, there is not so much as one man to be found, that either spoke for or practised such delay, but all the contrary. And when, about the year ELEVEN HUNDRED AND THIRTY, one sect among the Waldenses declared against the baptizing of infants, as being incapable of salvation; the main body of that people rejected their opinion. And the sect that still held to it quickly dwindled away and disappeared. And there was nothing more heard of holding that tenet till the year FIFTEEN HUNDRED AND TWENTY-TWO." This statement is farther corroborated, by Mr. Whiston, a man eminent in literature, who left the communion of the established church of England, and went over to the Baptists. He declares "that Dr. Wall's history of infant baptism, as to the facts, appeared to him most accurately done, and might be depended upon, by the Baptists themselves."

We do not adduce these testimonies of the christian fathers, or of later writers, to prove that infant baptism is a divine institution. We have attempted to prove that from the scriptures, and from the practice of the apostles. But they shew at least their own opinions, and the practice of the churches in their times. And from all these circumstances, there appears hardly room left for a doubt, that the opinions and practice of the christian churches, (with some exceptions in later ages,) have been in favor of infant baptism, from the days of the apostles to the present time.

But it will be expected, perhaps, that I answer some objections that may be made to the baptism of infants.

1. It is objected, there is no *command* for it. Shew a, "Thus saith the Lord,"(a) and we will follow thee.—It was once commanded that children should have a token of the covenant. God does not usually command things twice, without some special reason for it; and there seems no reason for this, after the ordinance was once instituted. As the former token of the covenant was applied to children, they would naturally apply this, unless expressly forbidden; as

(a) 1 Sam. ii. 27.

privileges, once granted are always to be enjoyed, till they are revoked. There was no more reason for a new command to apply baptism to children, merely because it was a different token from what was formerly applied to the same subjects; than there was for a new command to keep the sabbath, because it was changed from the last day of the week to the first. There are few christians, who have any scruples about keeping the first day of the week, as the sabbath, tho they have no express command for the change. They look upon apostolic practice a sufficient warrant.

2. It is objected that infants are incapable of believing, and therefore improper subjects of baptism.—I do not think Abraham ever made this objection to administering the token of the covenant to Isaac. And yet there is the same reason for his objecting, as for any christian parent, at the present day. No infants can be more incapable of believing than Isaac was at eight days old. But as it was an institution of God, the patriarch was reconciled to it, and indeed rejoiced in it; as the promise was “to him and to his seed.”(a) And Peter says to Gentile converts, alluding to the same subject; “The promise is unto you, and to your children.”(b) And besides, infants are capable of the essence of faith, or a holy and heavenly temper, otherwise they could not be prepared for heaven; and no one supposes they will all be lost: yet it is said, “He that believeth not shall be damned:”(c) and “Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.”(d) Christ, when on earth, had “infants”(e) and “little children”(f) brought to him, and he said, “of such is the kingdom of heaven.” If by the kingdom of heaven is here meant a state of glory, it shews that infants are capable of possessing a gracious, believing temper: and if by the phrase is meant, as some suppose, a church state on earth, it establishes the propriety of administering the token of the covenant to them. Christ’s being “much displeased”(g) with those, who would hinder them from being brought to him, shews that his commission had a special

(a) Gen. xvii. 7.

(d) Heb. xii. 14.

(g) Mark. x. 14.

(b) Acts ii. 39.

(e) Luke xviii. 15.

(c) Mark xvi. 16.

(f) Mat. xix. 13.

regard to children. And herein he fulfilled his prophetic character; "He shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom."<sup>(a)</sup>

3. It is objected that baptizing infants can do them no good; they are not active in it, and have no voice concerning it.—Children, under the former dispensation, were not active in, and had no voice concerning the administration of the token of the covenant, which they received; and yet the apostle says there was "much advantage in circumcision every way."<sup>(b)</sup> Persons might neglect praying for their infant children, upon this same ground; they could not join with them in it, and it could not become their act. But as they hope God will bless their children, in answer to their sincere prayers; so they have equal reason to hope that he will grant his blessing, when they sincerely perform towards them any other duties.—But as an evidence that the ordinance can be of no use to children, it is further urged, that many, who are the subjects of it, grow up as profligate and vicious as others, and many times even more so.—If this argument has any weight, it militates also against adult baptism. Simon Magus,<sup>(c)</sup> Ananias and Sapphira,<sup>(d)</sup> were baptized upon their own profession of faith; yet they were as bad and worse afterwards than before. They were more eminently wicked, than many who were never the subjects of that ordinance. It is not pretended that it is an ordinance necessarily connected with salvation. Both adults and infants may possess the sign, without the thing signified.

But some, who seem to allow that it may possibly be the duty of parents to give up their children to God in baptism, have scruples in regard to themselves, and say their consciences are not satisfied. "Why ought I not to be rebaptized, since the act of my parents in dedication can never become my own personal act, and *their duty*, in this particular, cannot be a discharge of *my duty*?"—Tho I think this question substantially answered in the remarks already made, yet, being acquainted with persons, whom I think sincere

(a) Isa. xl. 11. (b) Rom. iii. 1, 2. (c) Acts viii. 9—24. (d) Acts v. 1—10.

in their scruples on this point, leads me to reply to it more particularly. If parents do their duty in offering up their children to God in baptism, it proves that infant baptism is a divine institution. If infant baptism is not a divine institution, it could not be the duty of parents to attend to it: and if it is, it ought to satisfy the consciences of children; as there is no intimation in scripture of baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, (or christian baptism,) being administered twice to the same subject. If they are once baptized, according to divine appointment, it must be a misapprehension of mind, not to be satisfied with it. And besides, there was the same difficulty, if it be a difficulty, under the former covenant. Isaac and all infants that were circumcised had the same ground for scruples of conscience when they came to years of understanding: yet they were all satisfied, as the token of the covenant had the same significancy, applied to persons of every age. And Paul endeavors to prove that children, in this respect, stand in the same situation now as formerly, by saying, "if the root be holy, so are the branches;"(a) and if one of the parents is sanctified, the "children are holy."(b) He does not mean that they are certainly regenerated; for no parent, however holy himself, can communicate a divine temper to his children. But they are federally holy, that is, fit subjects of the token of the christian covenant.

The difficulty is further increased with some; as the transaction took place in their infancy, they cannot determine that their parents were sincere in offering them up, or that the preacher was sincere who administered the ordinance. And the case may be such, that they shall never be personally acquainted with either.—The validity of an outward ordinance does not depend upon the *real holiness* of the Dedicator or Administrator. If this were the case, no person could ever be certain that he was baptized, though the ordinance was administered to him in adult years. Few are assured of their good estate at all times; and they must doubt of their baptism, as often as they doubt of their gra-

(a) Rom. xi. 16.

(b) 1 Cor. vii. 14.

cious temper. The difficulty is still greater, in regard to the administrator. For tho persons may be acquainted with him, and he may appear to be a good man, this can never be absolutely known, till the day of judgment. It is the prerogative of God only "to know the hearts of the children of men." (a) If persons are regularly and scripturally inducted into office, their administrations are valid, even tho at a future day, they should be found to be hypocrites. While the scribes and pharisees retained Moses' seat, and inculcated the doctrines of the divine law, Christ commands the people, "All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do." (b) Man must judge from the outward appearance, "but the Lord looketh on the heart." (c)

But what renders this point still more perplexing to many, is, a misconception of certain texts of scripture; as "Repent and be baptized," (d) and "He that believeth and is baptized." (e) The same qualifications were enjoined under the former dispensation, yet they dedicated their children to God, in the ordinance; and God expressly required them to do it. Those were suitable commands to all adults, when circumcision was introduced; and they were suitable commands to all adults, when baptism was introduced; but they could not be applicable to infants under either dispensation. They were formerly received, and are now received, upon their parents' profession of faith. Peter's address, "Be baptized *every one* of you," was very proper to that audience, when they were all, in an unbaptized state; but would not be proper to another audience, where many of them were already baptized. Hence we see, he exhorts Simon Magus to "repent," but not to be rebaptized, tho he had submitted to that ordinance, while "in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity." (f) And our Baptist brethren practise the same. If they have once baptized a person, they do not exhort him to rebaptism, tho his conduct prove to them that he possessed neither repentance nor faith at the time of the administration of the ordinance; they only exhort him to possess the *things signified* by the washing of water.

(a) 1 Kings viii. 39.  
(d) Acts ii. 38.

(b) Mat. xxiii. 2, 3.  
(e) Mark xvi. 16.

(c) 1 Sam. xvi. 7.  
(f) Acts viii. 22. 23.



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(a) 1 Kings viii. 39.

(b) Mat. xxiii. 2, 3.

(c) 1 Sam. xvi. 7.

(d) Acts ii. 38.

(e) Mark xvi. 16.

(f) Acts viii. 22. 23.

4. It is objected to infant baptism, that it is *traditional*. If by this, it were meant that it is a tradition handed down by the apostles and primitive christians, and a continued practice of the church to the present day ; it would be conceded to be just. But what is generally meant by this, is, that it is unscriptural, and contrary to apostolic practice ; which we suppose sufficiently confuted by the preceding observations. It appears to have been of divine institution, and of regular and uninterrupted practice, among the great body of christians, in all ages. But this objection of tradition is as often applied to

The *mode* of baptism, usually adopted by Congregational churches, as to the subject to whom it is administered. And tho I think the *mode* of much less importance than the subject, and much less clearly pointed out in scripture, as also much less connected with the main subject of this discourse ; yet as it is thought to be of great importance by some, and indeed made so by numerous and frequent disputes about it ; it may be proper to add a few remarks respecting it.

The scriptures are very full and explicit in regard to baptism with water : but, as to the manner *how* this element is to be applied, they are less so. The mode of baptism must be determined, either from the *original word* made use of, from the *circumstances* attending the administration of the ordinance, or from scriptural *allusions* to the subject. But from neither of these can we derive absolute and decisive evidence : tho we may obtain that which gives a high degree of probability ; and sufficient to satisfy our consciences, in regard to a thing, which is confessed on all hands to be only circumstantial, and not necessary to the validity of the ordinance.\*

\* Our Baptist brethren, tho they administer the ordinance no other way themselves than by immersion, yet receive into their churches those that have been immersed by administrators who were themselves only sprinkled, and that in their infancy. If they did not consider this *substantially* baptism, they could not consider his administrations of any validity, as he would himself be in an *unauthorised, unbaptized* state. I do not know that receiving members in this way is a general practice, but it has taken place, among some of their most regular, and least exceptionable churches.

Babtizō is the only word made use of in the scriptures to express the christian ordinance of baptism. It is sometimes used as a noun, and sometimes as a verb with its various inflections. But this word determines nothing as to the mode of administering the ordinance. It signifies washing, but the manner *how* is left uncertain. All critics in the Greek language tell us it means dipping, pouring or sprinkling; i. e. washing in any mode. They mention dipping as one signification, and add, it is used more extensively, to wash, wet or sprinkle, where the thing is not dipped at all. And the writers of the new testament often use it, where plunging cannot possibly be meant. It is said of the pharisees, "When they come from the market, except they *wash* (Greek, *be baptized*) they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the *washing* (*baptisms*) of cups and pots, brazen vessels and of tables." (a) Here it is evident the word baptizō is used to signify only a partial washing of the subject, as of the hands; and also by pouring water upon utensils, as it must be, in regard to the tables. The apostle to the Hebrew speaks of "divers *washings*," (b) (*baptisms*) which were performed under the law. These were religious ceremonies made use of in cleansing from accidental defilement and bodily diseases, or in consecrating and setting apart to holy services. "A clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, and *sprinkle* it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that toucheth a bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave." (c) "The priest shall *sprinkle* upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy, seven times," (d) "And Moses took the anointing oil, and anointed the tabernacle and all that was therein, and sanctified them. And he *sprinkled* thereof upon the altar seven times. And he poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him to sanctify him." (e) "He took the blood of calves and of goats and *sprinkled* both the book and all the people. Moreover, he sprinkled likewise both the tabernacle, and all the

(a) Mark vii. 4.

(d) Lev. xiv. 5, 7.

(b) Heb. ix. 10.

(e) Lev. viii. 10, 11, 12.

(c) Numb. xix. 18.

vessels of the ministry.”(a) These various *pourings* and *sprinklings* the apostle calls “divers baptisms,” using the word baptizō. Since then, one under the guidance of inspiration uses the word to signify something besides *dipping*, it is hoped our Baptist brethren will not think *that* its only signification. We allow that dipping or plunging is one signification of the word, but not its only signification. And indeed the sacred writers more often use it to signify other modes of washing. When a pharisee invited our Lord to dine, “he marvelled that he had not first *washed (been baptized)* before dinner.”(b) Christ’s being baptized here could mean only a partial washing. And as baptizō is not confined in its meaning to plunging; so neither is baptō, the root from which it is derived. The Septuagint, or Greek translation of the old testament, makes use of this latter word, to express the circumstance of Nebuchadnezzar’s “body being wet (*baptized*) with the dew of heaven.”(c) This was shed down upon it. And Christ makes use of the same word, “He that *dippeth (baptizeth)* his hand with me in the dish.”(d) It is not here meant the hand should be totally immersed in the liquid; and yet Christ calls it baptizing the hand.

As nothing can be inferred certainly concerning the mode of baptism, from the *original word* made use of; so neither can there be, from the *circumstances* attending the administration of the ordinance. It is supposed by some, that because “John baptized in Enon,\* because there was much water there;”(e) he must certainly baptize by plunging. But this by no means follows. The phrase, *much water*, is in the original, *many waters*; by which we may understand a variety of streams and rivulets. And such a place might be chosen for other reasons, than the convenience of plunging. Water was necessary both to the multitude that assembled and the beasts that carried them, in whatever mode

\* Enon, which is the name of a territory near to Salim, is often mistaken for the name of a river; but it is of little consequence in this controversy.

(a) Heb. ix. 19, 21. (b) Luke 11 38. (c) Dan. iv. 33.  
(d) Mat. xxvi. 23. (e) John iii. 23.

baptism might be administered. And there is nothing said of their going into the water at Enon at all. John's baptizing Christ and many others *in* Jordan, is often adduced in proof of immersion. "Not *at* or *near*, but *in* Jordan." The same original word is used, where it is said "Ye have a custom that I should release unto you one *at* the Passover:"(a) and, "His sepulchre is *with* us unto this day."(b) Reading the text with this variation, there does not remain the shadow of proof of any particular mode of baptism. It is said, "When Jesus was baptized, he went up straightway *out of* the water."(c) and when Philip baptized the Eunuch, "they went down both *into* the water, and came up *out of* the water."(d) But this is a very natural representation, allowing they were baptized, as they doubtless were, by affusion or sprinkling. As rivers lie lower than their banks, they must go down to get *to* the water, and up to get *from* it; which is all the words translated *into* and *out of* necessarily signify. The same word, that is rendered *into*, in this case, is used in the command to Peter to "go *to* the sea and cast an hook;"(e) and in the relation of John's "coming first *to* the sepulchre;" tho it is expressly added, "yet went he not *in*."(f) And the word rendered *out of* is the same, in the Greek, which is rendered *from*, in the following passages. "All the generations *from* Abraham to David are fourteen generations."(g) And "the queen of the South came *from* the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon."(h) No one supposes she came out from *under* the ground. But allowing that we take *in* Jordan, and *into* the water, just as they stand, in the English translation, it by no means proves that plunging was the mode of baptizing. The evangelists observe that Jesus "entered into a ship and sat *in* the sea, and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land, and he taught them."(i) And on another occasion, that "he went up *into* a mountain, and taught his disciples."(j) It is not supposable that Mark meant to imply, by Christ's sitting *in* the sea, that he was immers-

(a) John xviii. 39.

(d) Acts viii. 38, 39.

(g) Mat. i. 17.

(j) Mat. v. 1, 2.

(b) Acts xii. 29.

(e) Mat. xvii. 27.

(h) Luke xi. 31.

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(c) Mat. iii. 16.

(f) John xx. 4, 5.

(i) Mark iv. 1, 2.

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mersed all the time he was preaching to the multitudes : or that Matthew designed to convey the idea, that he dug into the bowels of the earth to bury himself, in saying that he went up *into* a mountain. And yet the expressions are precisely the same, as where Christ is said to be baptized *in* Jordan, and the Eunuch to go down *into* the water. In this last instance also, there is another difficulty. It is said that Philip went down *into* the water, as well as the Eunuch. So that if the phrase, *going into the water*, necessarily implies plunging, it would prove that the administrator, as well as the subject, of the ordinance, was plunged : which, I believe, is more than any Baptist would be willing to admit. Tho I have said no circumstances attending the ordinance of baptism can determine its mode, yet there are some which give a high degree of probability in favor of pouring or sprinkling. The short space of John's ministry, and the vast numbers to whom he administered the ordinance (as there "went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him")<sup>(a)</sup> render it unlikely, if not absolutely impossible, that he should baptize them by immersion. He must, in that case, at the lowest computation of the numbers, have been in the water several hours each day, in which situation his life and health could not have been preserved without a constant miracle.\*

(a) Matt. iii. 5, 6.

\* Tho John's baptism was not christian baptism, yet it is probable he administered the ordinance in the same mode that the apostles did ; and therefore I am willing to give the argument all its weight. But those that represent Christ as our example in baptism, must be very ignorant of his design in submitting to the ordinance, as also of the character of the administrator. John was not a christian minister, but a priest under the law. He did not administer the ordinance in the name of Christ, nor of the Holy Ghost. Those that had been baptized by him had not heard whether "there was any Holy Ghost," and they were afterwards "baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." He could not baptize Christ in his own name. And the ordinance could not signify the same in regard to him, as it does in regard to others. It could not be a representation of the washing away of sin, as "he knew no sin." Christ's baptism was his public inauguration into the office of the priesthood. As he was to "preach righteousness in the great congregation"—"proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that were bound," it became necessary, in order "to fulfil all righteousness," i. e. to be "called as was Aaron," that he should submit to this ordinance. The priests under the law were sprinkled with water, and anointed with oil. Christ was baptized at Jordan,

The Jailor and his family were baptized immediately upon his profession of faith, and in the dead of night; (a) a time very unsuitable to go abroad to a river or fountain, if there had been one at hand, which there is no intimation of. And when Paul was baptized by Ananias, all the preparation that is mentioned, is, that he "arose;" (b) a proper posture to receive the ordinance. Damascus was a walled city, (c) and therefore unlikely that there was any river in it. Tho there was one in Babylon, (d) that was a peculiar case. In the baptism of those that assembled at the house of Cornelius, it is said, "Can any man forbid water?" (e) as tho it was to be brought; not that they were to go out to it. And the large accessions to the church on the day of Pentecost suggest the necessity of supposing an expeditious way of administering the ordinance of baptism. It was "the third hour of the day" (f) (i. e. nine o'clock in the morning) when they spake "with other tongues," (g) after which Peter preached a sermon, and the converts made a confession of their faith, which must have consumed three or four hours. And yet we read, "The *same day* there were added unto them about *three thousand* souls." (h) That the apostles should have immersed them all in that time is totally inconceivable. Besides they were in no situation for it. They were assembled together to celebrate a stated festival, at the usual place of worship. (i) It is worthy of remark that we never read of a person's going from the place of worship to receive the ordinance of baptism. Those that heard the word in the wilderness and believed, were baptized

(a) Acts xvi. 33, 35.

(b) Acts ix. 18.

(c) 2 Cor. xi. 33.

(d) Jer. li. 32. Rev. xvi. 12.

(e) Acts x. 47.

(f) Acts ii. 15.

(g) Acts ii. 4.

(h) Acts ii. 41.

(i) Acts ii. 1, 2.

and received the unction of the Holy Spirit, without measure. This is according to the prophecy, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted." Now, as there is no instance of any priest's being plunged, but only sprinkled or washed, as a mode of induction into office, it affords strong additional evidence, that John administered the rite to Christ, in this way. It is not likely he made any innovation, in regard to a practice, which was of divine appointment in the establishment of the very dispensation, under which he was authorized and officiated.



there. And those, that became converts at the river's side, were baptized there. The multitudes that assembled at the temple received baptism, where they exhibited tokens of repentance; and those at their own houses, immediately upon the profession of their faith, without any removal. There is no mention made in the scripture, of change of dress, or any other special convenience for immersion. These things, had they taken place, would undoubtedly, some of them among so many instances, have been recorded. Similar circumstances, of much less importance in themselves, in regard to other subjects, are noticed. When Christ "washed the disciples' feet," it is said, "he laid aside his garments, and took a towel and girded himself."(a) And when the Jews stoned Stephen, "the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul."(b)

It now only remains to see what light we can collect, concerning the mode of baptism, from scriptural *allusions* to the subject. Paul speaks twice of christians "being buried with Christ in baptism."(c) From which some conclude that plunging must necessarily be the mode of the administration of that ordinance. But never was a conclusion more unfounded. In order for this, it ought to be proved that baptism was instituted as a memorial of Christ's death; and then it ought to be administered with, and repeated as often as, the eucharist. Baptism implies that we ought to be "*dead* indeed unto sin, and *alive* unto God."(d) In this sense the expression of the apostle is very pertinent; especially as he adds, "like as Christ was raised up from the dead, so we also" (not should *rise up from the watery grave*, but) "should *walk in newness of life*."(e) We are said also to be "crucified with Christ."(f) So that we have as much reason to infer that the mode of baptism should represent his crucifixion, as his burial. And indeed plunging no more represents Christ's burial, which was "in a sepulchre, hewn out of a rock,"(g) than sprinkling does. Baptism is designed to represent the fruits of the spirit, rather

(a) John xiii. 4, 5. (b) Acts vii. 58. (c) Rom. vi. 4. Col. ii. 12.  
(d) Rom. vi. 11. (e) Rom. vi. 4. (f) Rom. vi. 6. (g) Mark xv. 46.

than the mode of his operation. And therefore nothing can be inferred decisively, as to the mode of this ordinance, from allusions to the subject. And if there could, it would be much more in favor of pouring or sprinkling, than of immersion. "There appeared unto the apostles cloven tongues like as of fire, and it *sat upon* each of them ;"(a) and divine grace was "*shed forth*"(b) upon the people ; in fulfilment of the prophecy, that God would "*pour out his Spirit*,"(c) and of the declaration of Christ, that they "should be *baptized* with the Holy Ghost."(d) The Israelites "were all baptized unto Moses, in the cloud and in the sea."(e) And yet, as they passed thro "upon the dry ground,"(f) there could nothing more than sprays from the sea, or distillations from the cloud, come upon them. "Christ gave himself to the church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water :"(g) and that blood, which "cleanses from all sin,"(h) is called "the blood of *sprinkling*"(i) God says, "My servant shall *sprinkle* many nations."(j) "Then will I *sprinkle* clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean."(k) And, "I will *pour* my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring."(l) If any should doubt whether applying water to a part only could be properly baptizing *the person*, Christ has resolved the difficulty, by telling Peter, that if his feet were washed, he was "clean every whit ;"(m) and that the woman in pouring ointment on his head, had "anointed his *body*."(n)

Notwithstanding there is such a high degree of presumptive evidence in favor of *pouring* or *sprinkling*, yet we do not doubt but *plunging* may be a *valid* mode of baptism. The validity of an ordinance does not depend upon the mode of its administration.—The mode of baptism by sprinkling is thought by some to have too little solemnity and self-denial in it. But the solemnity of an ordinance depends upon other things than the mode adopted for its administration ; and

(a) Acts ii. 3.

(b) Acts ii. 33.

(c) Joel ii. 28.

(d) Acts i. 5.

(e) 1 Cor. x. 2.

(f) Exod. xiv. 22.

(g) Eph. v. 25, 26.

(h) 1 John i. 7.

(j) Isa. lii. 13, 15.

(i) Heb. xii. 24. 1 Pet. i. 2.

(k) Ezek. xxxvi. 25.

(l) Isa. xlv. 3.

(m) John xiii. 10.

(n) Mark xiv. 3, 8.

self-denial does not consist in performing the rituals of religion, but in subjecting the mind to its spirit, and yielding obedience to its moral precepts. There were many formerly who were very strict in "tything mint, anise and cummin," while they neglected "the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith."<sup>(a)</sup> We need not seek for occasion of self-denial, where GOD has not enjoined it.

It is wished the observations that have been made may lead christians to make less account of the circumstantial, and more of the fundamentals, of religion; that we may not lose its spirit and influence, in disputing about its ornaments and attire; that the "ONE BAPTISM,"<sup>(b)</sup> to which we have all submitted, tho in different modes and at different ages, may not be cause of separation and division, but of "forbearing one another in love";<sup>(c)</sup> and that we may "keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace,"<sup>(d)</sup> knowing that the "kingdom of GOD is not meat and drink," modes and rituals, "but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."<sup>(e)</sup>

AMEN.

(a) Matt. xxiii. 23.  
(d) Eph. iv. 3.

(b) Eph. iv. 5.  
(e) Rom. xiv. 17.

(c) Eph. iv. 2.

# H Y M N

ON

## INFANT DEDICATION,

BY REV. JONA. FISHER,

OF BLUEHILL, (ME.)

THIRD EDITION: PRINTED BY S. K. GILMAN, 1820.

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## HYMN.

**L**ITTLE babe, I now receive thee  
From thy Maker's bounteous hand,  
With his precious grace I leave thee,  
May'st thou in his favor stand.

Psalm 127 : 3.

Prov. 20 : 7.

Weak and helpless, young and tender,  
Thou'rt committed to my care ;  
While my thanks to God I render,  
Thou a parent's love shalt share.

Gen. 33 : 13.

1 Chron. 22 : 5.

Born in sin, in sin conceived,  
Satan would destroy thy soul ;  
But by this my fear's relieved,  
Grace can Satan's wiles controul.

Psalm 51 : 5.

1 Peter 5 : 8.

Luke 11 : 22.

God's free Spirit in a twinkling,  
Can display resistless power,  
Can apply the blood of sprinkling,  
And thy ruin'd state restore.

Psalm 110 : 3.

Heb. 12 : 24.

1 Pet. 1 : 2.

Thee a gracious God has lent me,  
For thy precious soul, I feel ;  
Back to God I now present thee,  
To receive a holy seal.

Luke 2 : 22.

Rom. 4 : 11.

- This shall seal the cov'nant to me  
In which God has thus agreed,  
"I will be a God both to thee,  
"And a God unto thy seed."
- Gen. 17 : 7, 10.
- Gen. 17 : 1. Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
18 : 19. If I truly faithful be,  
22 : 17. Stand engag'd, through Jesus' merit,  
Isai. 44 : 3. To bestow free grace on thee.
- Gen. 26 : 45. Blessed cov'nant, what extension !  
Rom. 5. 20. Grace abounding over sin !  
O the glorious condescension,  
Mark 10 : 14. Thus to take our infants in !
- Acts 16 : 15, 33. Still no cause we find to sever  
Parents from their children dear ;  
2 : 39. Both united still together  
Psalm 37 : 26. In the gracious promise share.
- Gen. 17 : 11. Of God's cov'nant as the token,  
Abr'am's sons were circumcis'd ;  
7. If the cov'nant be not broken,  
14. Infants now may be baptiz'd.
- Rom. 11 : 16—25. 'Twas the olive once did nourish  
Jews, rejected now for sin ;  
On the same the Gentiles flourish  
Now through faith engrafted in.
- Luke 18 : 15. If believers for their offspring  
16. Then had heavenly blessings seal'd,  
Thus believers are in nothing  
From such blessings *now* withheld.
- Rom. 11 : 17. Jews the olive's sap and sweetness  
Did enjoy for Jesus' sake,  
Of its precious root and fatness  
Holy Gentiles still partake.
- 1 Cor. 7 : 14. Children still are holy named  
From the parent, who believes ;  
Surely then we must be blamed,  
Mat. 19 : 14. If we slight, when Christ receives.

Hearing what the word has told me,  
Precious babe, a call I find  
In the arms of faith to hold thee  
To receive the seal design'd.

O for grace to make me careful  
All my duty to discharge;  
Humble I shall be, and prayerful,  
If the Lord my heart enlarge.

Daily I would be instilling  
Heav'nly truths into thy mind;  
If a gracious God be willing.  
These thy heart at length shall find.

Sharp corrections, if required,  
For thy failings thou must feel,  
To promote the end desired,  
And preserve thy soul from hell.

Still with God's free grace I leave thee,  
When my duty all is done,  
His free grace alone must save thee,  
For the sake of Christ his Son.

Aug. 22, 1802.

Gen 17 : 14.  
with  
Acts 2 : 39,  
& Rom. 11 : 17.

Eph. 6 : 4.

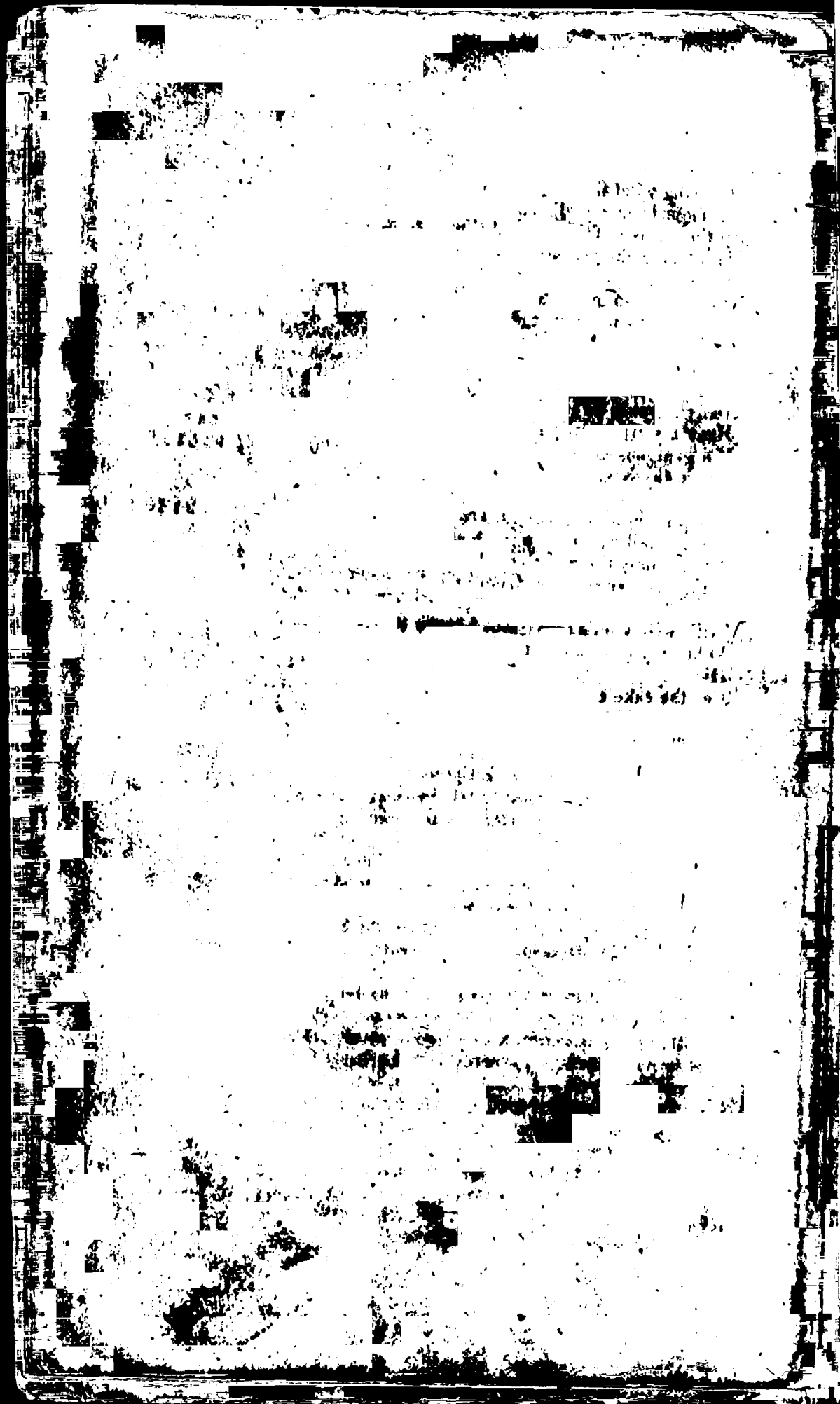
Psal. 119 : 32.

Deu. 6 : 7.  
5 : 29.  
Eccle. 11 : 6.

Prov. 19 : 18.  
22 : 15.  
23 : 13, 14.  
29 : 17.

Eph. 2 : 8, 9.

FINIS.



REV. MR. SEWALL'S

# P O E M,

ON

## THE MODE OF BAPTISM.

*Second Edition.*

QUESTED  
1864

SOME think there's no baptism pleasing to God,  
Without being plunged in the deep rolling flood ;  
So Peter once thought, when mistaking he said,  
Not my feet only, Lord, but my hands and my head.  
But Jesus said, " Peter, I do what is fit,  
If thy feet are but wash'd, thou art clean every whit."  
From *this* and from *other* transactions we scan,  
That washing *but part* is baptizing the man.  
When John came baptizing in Jordan's bold flood,  
And Enon, or elsewhere, where much water stood ;  
How the rite was perform'd it is never once said,  
Whether he dipp'd into water, or sprinkled the head.  
The Eunuch with Philip stept into the stream,  
And there he baptiz'd him, but *how* is not seen.  
He might plunge him in, if the stream was so deep,  
Or pour on the water that rill'd o'er the steep.  
The three thousand converts, receiving the word,  
Went out to no water to close with their Lord.  
So *Lydia* and *her's*, and the Jailor by night,  
And *Saul*, that had fasted three days without sight,  
*Cornelius*, and others, where Peter was sent  
To tell what the gospel in purity meant :  
They heard the word spoken, and in the same place,  
As it seems, they were seal'd with the cov'nant of grace.  
The word does not show us their watery tomb,  
Tho' many to preach it so boldly presume.

John 13 :  
9, 10.

John  
3 : 23.

Acts  
8 : 38.

Acts  
2 : 41.  
16 : 15, 33.  
& 9 : 18.  
Acts 10 :  
47, 48.



- Heb. 10 :        With water to wash is the same with *baptize*,  
 22. & 9 :        As Paul to the Hebrews quite strongly implies.  
 10, 13, 19.      The divers baptisms, if well understood,  
                     Mean washings, or cleansings of different mode.  
                     "But how can we wash without dipping, (one cries,) *"To sprinkle with water is but to rantize."*
- Luke              But how was it Mary wash'd Jesus's feet,  
 7 : 38.            When weeping she came as he sat down to meat ?  
                     She did not immerse them, nor pour on a flood,  
                     But only bedew'd them with tears as she stood.
- Mark              And how were the *pots* and the *tables* made clean ?  
 7 : 4.             By sprinkling, or dipping, or water pour'd in ?
- Acts              And where were the *men* and the *women immers'd*,  
 8 : 12.            When Christ in Samaria, was preach'd at the first ?
- John 4 :          Of *ponds*, or of *streams* there, the Bible don't tell,  
 6, 11.            But only informs us of Jacob's deep well.  
                     Baptism, perform'd by the Spirit of God,  
                     Was done by *outpouring*, as seen by the word.
- Joel 2 :          "In the last days, saith God, I my Spirit will pour  
 28, 29.            "On my servants and handmaids, and multitudes more."  
                     When Jesus burst open the bars of the grave,  
                     Arising triumphant, with all power to save ;
- Acts 2 : 2.       The spirit descended like rushing of winds,  
                     To change many hearts and to baptize his friends.
- Acts 2 :          The forecited prophecy then came to pass,  
 16, 17.            As Peter declares in his pungent address.  
                     But how 'twas accomplish'd is worth our concern,  
                     If thereby the mode of baptism we learn.
- Acts 2 :          Th' Apostles were baptiz'd with fire as it came,  
 3, 33.            And on their heads rested, like tongues of bright flame.  
                     The Spirit Divine on each subject was *shed*,  
                     As *Joel before*, and as *Peter then* said.
- 1 : 5.             Christ too of this season, his foll'wers appriz'd ;  
                     He said, "John his hearers with water baptiz'd ;
- 11 : 16.          "But you some days hence a baptism shall share,  
                     "With the Ghost that is Holy, and gifts that are rare."  
                     When he was exalted to glory and power,  
                     He *sprinkled* the nations with this blessed shower ;
- Isa. 52.          As once by the prophet Isaiah was foretold ;  
 13, 15.            Ezekiel saw (likely) this time too of old.
- Ezek. 36 :       Thus *pouring* the Spirit, and *sitting* of tongues,  
 24, 25.           And *shedding* out gifts, or thus *sprinkling*, the throngs,  
                     Are baptism call'd, in the word thus it stands,  
                     And who dare be wiser than God and his friends ?  
                     "But this is baptizing by *figure*," some cry,  
                     But where does the *essence* of baptism lie ?  
                     If in *dipping alone*, as many pretend,

Then how can *affusion* in figure extend  
 To *shadow* forth dipping in any one sense ?  
 It fits not in *likeness*, in *deed*, nor *pretence* !  
 But grant me that *washing* the rite does comprise,  
 And signifies *cleansing*, as truth testifies,  
 Then *pouring* or *sprinkling*, will fitly apply  
 To *figure* baptism, we plainly descry.  
 Being buried with Christ in baptism, Paul saith,  
 We are planted in *likeness* of Jesus's *death*.  
 But surely he *died* on the cross, while *erect*,  
 When wrath was *pour'd* on him for all the elect.  
 If proof here appears by way of allusion  
 For *dipping* ; the same too appears for *affusion*,  
 If we dig up *Baptizo*, both seed, sprout and pippin,  
 There's nought found *decisive* in favor of dipping.  
 For Nebuchadnezzar, when once he was craz'd,  
 By Heaven drove out, with the cattle he graz'd ;  
 His body was often *baptiz'd*\* with the dew :  
 But how this meant dipping the Greek does not shew !  
 But granting some thousands of years before Christ,  
 The word nothing else but immersion express'd ;  
 Yet if Jesus, and those, whom his Spirit informs,  
 Say it signifies *shedding*, shall we mortal worms,  
 Arraign them before the tribunal of letters,  
 As rebels bound fast in grammatical fetters !  
 Rather trembling retract such a daring attempt,  
 And infinite wisdom from censure exempt !  
 The *Greek*, and the *Latin*, and *Hebrew* old text,  
 By Pilate o'er Christ's dying head were affix'd.  
 We ought to be careful we don't do the same,  
 And set up our learning, till Jesus be slain.  
 When these things are pled for, till saints are rejected,  
 Then Christ *again* groans, in his members afflicted.  
 Enlarge not his words, lest he should reprove,  
 Or blot out thy name from the records above.  
 To shadow the working of grace, that's within,  
 By *washing*, *remitting*, and *cleansing* from sin,  
 Is that which baptism in truth has in view,  
 The same thing is answered to Gentile and Jew.  
 Both *pouring* and *dipping* the word does approve ;  
 The Spirit too owns all who practise in love,  
 In any such mode as in scripture *they* find,

Acts.

22 : 16.

Heb.

10 : 22.

Eph.

5 : 26.

Tit. 3 : 5.

Rom.

6 : 5.

Dan. 4 :

33. See the  
*Septuagint* or  
*Greek translation* of the  
*O. Testament*.

Acts 1 : 5.

&amp; 2 : 38.

Prov. 30 : 6.

Rv. 22 : 18, 19.

Mark 1 : 4.

Acts 2 : 38.

Luke 3 : 3.

\* "Wet with the dew of Heaven." In the Greek, it is a word from *Bapto*.

Their conscience is answer'd and peace fills the mind,  
Then let not God's children fall out by the way,  
Lest they by contending, from truth run astray,  
But all, as dear children keep close to the Lord,  
Receiving each other with hearty accord.

1 Pet. 3 : 21.  
Gen. 45 : 24.  
1 Cor. 3 : 4.  
Eph. 5 : 1, 2.  
Rom. 15 : 7.

FINIS.